

CLAIMS:

1. A biological scanner for scanning a biological growth medium, the scanner comprising:

5 a transport mechanism to draw the biological growth medium into the biological scanner;

a platen within the biological scanner;

one or more sensors to detect when the biological growth medium is drawn to a scanning position adjacent the platen;

10 an actuator to press the biological growth medium against the platen when the one or more sensors detect that the biological growth medium is drawn to the scanning position; and

an imaging device to generate an image of the biological growth medium when the biological growth medium is pressed against the platen.

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2. The biological scanner of claim 1, wherein the actuator comprises a second platen, and a solenoid that moves the second platen.

3. The biological scanner of claim 1, further comprising a processor that counts
20 biological agents in the medium based on the image.

4. The biological scanner of claim 1, further comprising an illumination device to illuminate the biological growth medium when the biological growth medium is pressed against the platen.

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5. The biological scanner of claim 4, further comprising:

a first illumination device to illuminate a top side of the biological medium when the biological growth medium is pressed against the platen; and

30 a second illumination device to illuminate a bottom side of the biological medium when the biological growth medium is pressed against the platen.

6. The biological scanner of claim 1, wherein the imaging device comprises a camera.

7. The biological scanner of claim 1, further comprising:

5 a first slot formed in a first side of the scanner for receiving the biological growth medium; and

a second slot formed in a second side of the scanner for ejecting the biological growth medium following generation of the image.

10 8. The biological scanner of claim 1, wherein the transport mechanism comprises a set of rollers.

9. The biological scanner of claim 8, further comprising a hinged door, wherein a first subset of the rollers are disposed on the hinged door and a second subset of the
15 rollers abut the first subset of the rollers when the hinged door is closed.

10. The biological scanner of claim 8, wherein a first subset of the rollers are spring biased against a second subset of the rollers.

20 11. The biological scanner of claim 8, further comprising a motor to drive at least a subset of the rollers to draw the biological growth medium into the biological scanner.

12. The biological scanner of claim 1, further comprising:

25 a first sensor to detect insertion of the biological growth medium and cause the transport mechanism to draw the biological growth medium into the scanner; and

a second sensor to detect when the biological growth medium is drawn to the scanning position and cause the actuator to press the biological growth medium against the platen.

30 13. The biological scanner of claim 1, further comprising:

a first sensor to detect insertion of the biological growth medium and cause the transport mechanism to draw the biological growth medium into the scanner;

a second sensor to detect when the biological growth medium is drawn to a first scanning position and cause the actuator to press the biological growth medium against the platen; and

5 a third sensor to detect when the biological growth medium is drawn to a second scanning position and cause the actuator to press the biological growth medium against the platen.

14. The biological scanner of claim 13, wherein the first scanning position corresponds to an indicia location on the biological growth medium and the second
10 scanning position corresponds to a location of biological agents on the biological growth medium.

15. The biological scanner of claim 1, further comprising:
a first set of footings on a first side of the biological scanner; and
15 a second set of footings on a second side of the biological scanner such that the biological scanner can be positioned on either of the first or second set of footings.

16. A biological scanner for scanning a biological growth medium, the scanner comprising:
20 a housing;
an imaging device to generate an image of the biological growth medium when the biological growth medium is within the housing;
a first set of footings on a first side of the housing; and
a second set of footings on a second side of the housing such that the biological
25 scanner can be positioned on either of the first or second set of footings.

17. The biological scanner of claim 16, further comprising:
a first slot formed in a first side of the housing for receiving the biological growth medium; and
30 a second slot formed in a second side of the housing for ejecting the biological growth medium following generation of the image, wherein the first slot is disposed on a right side of the scanner when the scanner is positioned on the first set of footings and

a front side of the scanner is facing a user and the first slot is disposed on a left side of the scanner when the scanner is positioned on the second set of footings and the front side of the scanner is facing the user.

- 5 18. A biological scanner for scanning a biological growth medium, the scanner comprising:
- a housing formed with a hinged door;
- an imaging device to generate an image of the biological growth medium when the biological growth medium is within the housing;
- 10 a set of rollers to draw the biological growth medium into the biological scanner, the set of rollers including a first subset of rollers disposed on the hinged door; and a second subset of rollers that abut the first subset of the rollers when the hinged door is closed.
- 15 19. The biological scanner of claim 18, wherein a first subset of the rollers are spring biased against a second subset of the rollers when the hinged door is closed.
20. The biological scanner of claim 18, wherein a second subset of the rollers are spring biased against a first subset of the rollers when the hinged door is closed.
- 20 21. The biological scanner of claim 18, further comprising a motor to drive at least some of the rollers to draw the biological growth medium into the biological scanner.
22. A biological scanning system comprising:
- 25 a biological scanner for scanning a biological growth medium, the scanner comprising a transport mechanism to draw the biological growth medium into the biological scanner, a platen within the biological scanner, one or more sensors to detect when the biological growth medium is drawn to a scanning position adjacent the platen, an actuator to press the biological growth medium against the platen when the one or
- 30 more sensors detect that the biological growth medium is drawn to the scanning position, and an imaging device to generate an image of the biological growth medium when the biological growth medium is pressed against the platen; and

a computer coupled to the biological scanner and including a processor that counts biological agents in the medium based on the image.

5 23. The system of claim 22, wherein the actuator comprises a second platen, and a solenoid that moves the second platen.

24. The system of claim 22, wherein the imaging device comprises a camera.

10 25. The system of claim 22, wherein the transport mechanism comprises a set of rollers, the biological scanner further comprising a hinged door, wherein a first subset of the rollers are disposed on the hinged door and a second subset of the rollers about the first subset of the rollers when the hinged door is closed.

15 26. The system of claim 25, wherein a first subset of the rollers are spring biased against a second subset of the rollers.

27. The system of claim 22, the biological scanner further comprising:
a first sensor to detect insertion of the biological growth medium and cause the transport mechanism to draw the biological growth medium into the scanner; and
20 a second sensor to detect when the biological growth medium is drawn to the scanning position and cause the actuator to press the biological growth medium against the platen.

28. The system of claim 22, the biological scanner further comprising:
25 a first sensor to detect insertion of the biological growth medium and cause the actuator to draw the biological growth medium into the scanner;
a second sensor to detect when the biological growth medium is drawn to a first scanning position and cause the actuator to press the biological growth medium against the platen, wherein the imaging device generates a first image associated with the first
30 scanning position; and

a third sensor to detect when the biological growth medium is drawn to a second scanning position and cause the actuator to press the biological growth medium against

the platen, wherein the imaging device generates a first image associated with the first scanning position,

wherein the processor identifies an indicia associated with the biological growth plate based on the first image and counts biological agents in the medium based on the second image.

29. The system of claim 28, wherein the first scanning position corresponds to an indicia location on the biological growth medium and the second scanning position corresponds to a location of biological agents on the biological growth medium.

30. The system of claim 22, the biological scanner further comprising:
a first set of footings on a first side of the biological scanner; and
a second set of footings on a second side of the biological scanner such that the biological scanner can be positioned on either of the first or second set of footings.

31. A method comprising
receiving a biological growth medium in a biological scanner;
drawing the biological growth medium to a first scanning position within the scanner;
generating a first image of the biological growth medium;
drawing the biological growth medium to a second scanning position within the scanner; and
generating a second image of the biological growth medium.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the first image includes indicia and the second image includes biological agents on the biological growth medium.

33. The method of claim 31, further comprising ejecting the biological growth medium from the biological scanner

34. The method of claim 31, further comprising processing the first image to identify the biological growth medium.

35. The method of claim 31, further comprising processing the second image to count biological agents in the medium based on the second image.

5 36. The method of claim 31, further comprising:
pressing the biological growth medium against a platen when the medium is at the first scanning position;
releasing the biological growth medium from the platen after generating the first image;
10 pressing the biological growth medium against a platen when the medium is at the second scanning position; and
releasing the biological growth medium from the platen after generating the second image.

15 37. The method of claim 31, further comprising processing the first image to identify the biological growth medium and processing the second image to count biological agents in the medium based on the second image, wherein processing the first image and processing the second image occur internal to the biological scanner.

20 38. The method of claim 31, further comprising:
communicating the first and second images to a computer;
processing the first image to identify the biological growth medium; and
processing the second image to count biological agents in the medium based on the second image, wherein processing the first image and processing the second image
25 occur in the computer, the computer being external to the biological scanner.

39. A biological scanner for scanning a biological growth medium, the scanner comprising:
a transport mechanism to draw the biological growth medium into the biological
30 scanner;
a platen within the biological scanner;

an imaging device to detect when the biological growth medium is drawn to a scanning position adjacent the platen and to generate an image of the biological growth medium when the biological growth medium is pressed against the platen; and

5 an actuator to press the biological growth medium against the platen when the imaging device detects that the biological growth medium is drawn to the scanning position.